

Meeting Minutes  
Delaware Native Species Commission  
October 16, 2019 at 10 am  
Kent County Administrative Building, 555 Bay Road, Dover, Delaware  
Room 220

Minutes approved on: December 18, 2019

**Members Present**

James White, Chair  
Robert Thornton, Vice-Chair  
Lori Athey  
Darin Callaway  
Sarah Cooksey  
Jeffery Downing  
Christopher Heckscher  
Jessica Inhof (via phone)

Michael Petit de Mange  
David Saveikis  
Tracy Surles  
Janice Truitt  
Susan Barton  
Valann Budischak  
Michael Costello  
Ashley Kennedy

**Members Absent**

Katherine Holtz  
James McCulley  
Matthew Sarver

**Administrative Staff**

Jennifer Childears, Administrative Specialist III

**Public Present**

Senator Stephanie Hansen (via phone)  
Bill McAvoy  
Nick Fina  
Chris Bennett  
Steve Cottrell

**Call to Order**

Mr. White called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

**Review and Approval of Minutes**

The commission reviewed the minutes of the June 19, 2019 meeting. Ms. Truitt made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cooksey to accept the minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously by commission members present at that meeting.

The commission reviewed the minutes of the August 21, 2019 meeting. Ms. Cooksey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Truitt to accept the minutes with a correction to Mr. Downing's name on page 5. The motion carried unanimously by commission members present at that meeting.

## **Unfinished Business**

### **Symposium**

Mr. Downing reported that the Educational Subcommittee discussed moving from a symposium format to a summit format, which would bring together conservation-minded organizations and people for the purpose of discovering ways to work together to improve the collective response to biodiversity threats. The summit would have breakout sessions and workshops to brainstorm actions plans. The subcommittee felt this approach would have more attendance and a better chance of long-term success.

Mr. Downing also reported on an estimated budget of \$12,000.00, including the \$4,000.00 fee of Ms. Fischel, who would be the summit coordinator. Mr. Downing is hopeful that a majority of the cost could be covered by sponsorships and by possibly having a small registration fee for the summit.

Ms. Cooksey made a motion, seconded by Dr. Heckscher, to accept the concept of a summit format. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Cooksey made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thornton, to support a budget of no more than \$12,000.00 which includes the previously approved \$4,000, and to seek endorsements from other organizations to help defray costs for the summit. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Saveikis noted the next step was to obtain a scope of work from Ms. Fischel so staff at the Division of Fish & Wildlife could convert it into a contract.

### **Mid-Atlantic Native Gardens list**

Ms. Cooksey provided commission members with a list Ms. Athey had compiled of native plant gardens that are certified by the National Wildlife Federation. Ms. Cooksey thought the list should now go to the Education Subcommittee to hold. Discussion followed about the title of the list, the purpose of the list and what should be added or removed. The original purpose was to provide the public with places they could visit to see how native species could work in a garden setting. The current list includes private garden areas, so the commission would need to revise the list before making it available to the public. Ms. Athey agreed to take the original list and her list and blend them into one. Mr. Thornton suggested creating criteria for getting on the list as once it is public, other people may want to be included. Input from the public included suggestions for creating an online gallery of the areas and perhaps highlighting areas each month.

## **New Business**

### **General Assembly Report**

Ms. Childears reviewed the report for 2019 and listed the items that were needed to complete the report. Items include updated and new biographies for members, goals for 2020, commission activities and an overview of the year's meetings. Mr. White requested the commission members provide goals and biographies to Ms. Childears before November 27<sup>th</sup> so the final draft of the report can be discussed at the December meeting.

### Budget Spending

Ms. Childears provided the eligible commission members with mileage and toll reimbursement forms and explained how to sign up with the State to receive reimbursement.

### Legislation

Senator Hansen opened discussion for a revised draft bill on invasive plants. Senator Hansen used commission comments from the first draft to update this bill. The Senator also added new sections to the bill after reviewing similar bills from the surrounding states. Senator Hansen reviewed each line of the bill where she updated or added information.

Discussion centered on having a definitive list of invasive and/or non-native plant species, what would be considered acceptable under exportation of invasive species, disposal of stock of invasive species by retailers, enforcement, fines and the length of time needed to phase in the ban if approved into law.

Additional discussion focused on Ms. Surles mentioning that New Castle County uses a generally recognized invasive species (reed canary grass) in a wastewater treatment field. The County has been looking into alternatives but has not been successful. As one of the charges of the commission is government leading by example, the commission members encouraged Ms. Surles to keep looking into the matter.

The next steps are for Senator Hansen to make edits to the draft and bring before Commission again. Senator Hansen hopes to introduce the bill to the General Assembly in January.

### Strategic Planning Briefing

Ms. Cooksey provided a one-page handout reviewing steps to take when creating a strategic plan. It was suggested that strategic planning be part of the Commission's 2020 goals. Ms. Cooksey offered to lead a strategic planning discussion in the future.

### Law and Regulations Subcommittee Report

Ms. Ardt was on the agenda to present on the nursery certification program but had a scheduling conflict. Mr. Petit de Mange noted that the subcommittee had not meet since August but was planning a meeting in the near future.

### Education Subcommittee Report

Mr. Downing reported that the subcommittee intended to launch the Delaware, Naturally campaign at the upcoming summit or at a Delaware Nursery and Landscape Association event. The subcommittee is also looking at different artwork for a logo. Work continues on creating a portable table top display. The subcommittee is also working with the Delaware Education Association to create an educational curriculum for school children.

### Top Ten Tasks

No updates at this meeting.

### Goals for 2019

No updates at this meeting.

### **Other Business**

Ms. Childears provided a list of meeting dates for 2020 to the commission members. Ms. Childears also read an invitation for the commission to give a presentation during DNREC's Parks and Recreation's lecture series at the Indian River Life-Saving Station. Mr. White mentioned he has a PowerPoint presentation that could be used and Mr. Thornton expressed interest in being the presenter. Ms. Childears will forward the email invitation to Mr. Thornton.

### **Public Comment**

Steve Cottrell talked about invasive species that are taking over public lands in New Castle County. Mr. Cottrell feels the Commission should make eradicating them a priority and should create funding for a program and volunteers to work on that. Mr. White commented that one of the overall goals of the commission is to help. Ms. Budischak recalled a public member at the last meeting discussing a volunteer training program. Chris Bennett, DNREC's Division Parks and Recreation, explained that he follows specific criteria when evaluating land for removal of invasive species and has set treatment protocols that must be followed. Mr. Bennett also mentioned that his staff consisted of himself and one other. Dr. Heckscher noted that if the Commission could facilitate getting funding for additional staff, it could help.

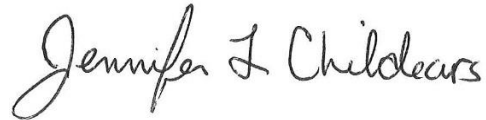
### **Next Meeting Date and Location**

The next meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2019, in Room 220 at 10:00 am.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:14 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer L. Childears". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Childears, Administrative Specialist III  
DNREC, Division of Fish & Wildlife